

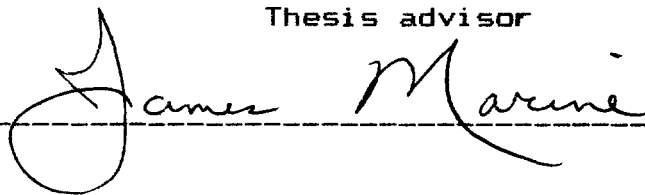
Students for Students: New Approaches for
Student Association, Residence Hall Association
and Student Center Programming Board

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

by

Scott Yarger

Thesis advisor

James Marini

Ball State University

Muncie, IN

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Students for Students, Part I

HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

A student as he or she goes through a college career has multiple opportunities to join social, academic and professional organizations. The perennial question facing student groups, however, is how to attract new members and publicize the activities. Not too long ago, this could be accomplished by holding a dance or open house and inviting the student body.

Student interests, however, have changed and become more specialized. Students at Ball State in the 1980's are a less homogenous lot than in earlier times. Teaching majors now have given away to specialized business majors and freshman choose science and business fields more often over traditional liberal arts. [1] Despite complaints about Ball State being a suitcase college, applications for new student groups continue to be received by the Office of Student Programs, pointing out the strength of the student organization concept. Also, three-fifths of those freshman surveyed in 1983 believed there was either some chance or a good chance of participating in a student organization. [2] When faced with poor attendance or low voter turnout, however, critics often blame student non-interest. This paper will seek to demonstrate that other factors are more often involved and suggest how they can be dealt with by student leaders.

Returning to the subject of student interests, research has shown college students tend to follow fixed patterns of

group participation based on their high school years. Students in these studies found individual sports, social, academic or religious organizations often to be their prime interest. They remained nonchalant about activities in other realms. Doctoral student Gloria Kapp found students will most consistently belong to the same types of organizations as those in which they participated during high school. Also the person's major area of study and desire for achievement affects what and how many organizations he or she will join. [3]

ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PEOPLE

Out of the many academic, athletic, communications, cultural, political, religious and social organizations on campus, three in particular have been selected for this paper. These have been chosen as three of the most influential and widely known organizations on campus. Personal experience has also aided in making the choice, since involvement has allowed the author first-hand experience.

I have sought out advice and wish to thank the following people who have helped most with this paper. From Student Association: Dr. James Marine, assistant dean for student programs; Kyle Babcock, Student Association president 1983-84; Dan Hampton 1983-84 vice-president; and Bruce Roaden, 1982-83 vice-president. From Student Center Programming Board: Mari Ann Barta, Student Center Program coordinator; David Clark; president, Kathy West, vice-president; Tito Carde, publicity chairperson; (all 1983-1984 officers.) From Residence Hall Association: the 1983-1984 officers -- Beth Treska, president;

Barry Lomont, committee vice-president; Paul Lybarger, coordinating vice-president; Mark Ladd, treasurer; Beth Frazee, secretary. Also from Residence Hall Association, Nick Nicklaus, assistant director for residence hall personnel.

STRUCTURE

For each of the organizations, the section is divided into four areas: history, discussion, recommendations, and section conclusion. In the case of Student Association, a more thorough treatment of the history and structure is provided to help the reader understand the dimensions of the current problems. With Residence Hall Association, more attention is paid to policy and purpose of the organization. With Student Center Programming Board, more emphasis is given to the means whereby its stature may be enhanced among students and university officials. All three studies, can be tied to one overall aim: that of getting students more aware and appreciative of their student organizations.

PUBLICITY AND PRESS

One organization which is mentioned but not directly dealt with is the campus newspaper, the Daily News. Based on a four year observation period, a definite trend seems to exist toward decreased "free publicity" given to student organizations. Reporters are no longer assigned Student Center Programming Board or Residence Hall Association beats, and events once considered campus news "staples" are instead often ignored. This

has been particularly a problem for Residence Hall Association and will be discussed later in that organization's section of this paper. Also a greater amount of cynicism toward Student Association exists among the Daily News editors, as indicated by negative editorials and diminished coverage.

This situation does seem to coincide with increasing suspicions between student politicians and student journalists. A survey by National On-Campus Report found student indifference of the issues to be regarded by both politicians and journalist as a top campus problem. Student organizations are not regarded as being the most capable in garnering more student involvement. [4] Increasingly the task for these organizations would seem to be improving their effectiveness and promotions in the eyes of students and the press.

The student press, however, does not always have to play the critical watchdog of student organizations, as evidenced through recent back issues of the Purdue Exponent and Indiana Daily Student. The Exponent featured a Student Association and Residence Hall Association beat reporter. [5] The Daily Student contained previews of Student Senate actions and featured personality features of local student leaders. [6]* Whether this

*For specific examples, the reader is referred to the stories "IUSA is voice of the students, Departments are heart of the association," May 21, 1984 Indiana Daily Student, p. 6. and Rawald has two personalities: student and new student leader," May 25, IDS, p. 6.

is from better organizations, better press or simply better relations between the two is unresolved. However, these examples do offer ideas for expanded organization-press involvement.*

*For a further discussion of this theme, see the epilogue.

Section Notes

1. Based on figures supplied by Richard Rowray, director of admissions, September 1984.

2. From the Office of Dean of Students, Autumn Quarter 1983 p. 4.

3. Gloria Kapp, College Extracurricular Activities: Who Participates and What Are the Benefits?, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1979, p. 163-164.)

4. "Students Share Blame of Education Woes," National On-Campus Report, January 27, 1984, Vol 12, No 2 p. 4

5. From a review of the Purdue Exponent, Vol 100, September 1983 to April 1984.

6. From a review of the Indiana Daily Student, Vol 117, December 1983 to April 1984.

Students for Students, Part II

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

The Ball State Student Association came into existence on April 27, 1933, when it was approved by the student body as the organization for promoting student government and related concerns. Student Association expanded into a comprehensive legislative, executive and judicial system of government in 1961. The Ball State Student Senate has since then assumed the role of being the student "voice" on relevant issues on campus. The executive branch both initiates new programs approved by the senate, and supervises current services of the association. The Judicial Court members review individual and organization appeals concerning student policies.

Acting as the policy-maker of Student Association, Student Senate operates under parliamentary procedure for considering student welfare and organizational issues. One obvious characteristic of the Student Senate which differs from some other student governments is its large size. Thirty-four hall and two family housing representatives are matched by 36 off-campus representatives. Eleven freshman, nine at-large and five graduate senators also serve, making the total 97 members for this body. [1] Senators are elected at various times during the school year, depending on their individual constituency's bylaws.

The elected executive officers are the president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Starting in 1979, presidential candidates have been required to campaign under a slate system comprised by the four executive officers. The

presidential slate is elected on the first Tuesday in April. Another major change for Student Association came in the following year with the incorporation of Off-Campus Student Affairs into the Student Association framework. The 1983-84 Student Association budget was approximately \$57,000, and of that amount \$37,000 came under direct Student Senate review. [2]

The departments within Student Association are the following: Academic Affairs, Governmental Affairs, Off-Campus Student Affairs, Office of Information, Office of Research and Analysis, Student Services, University Affairs and Graduate Student Affairs. Within Student Services exist Birth Control Information Center (B.C.I.C), Better Business Bureau (B.B.B.), Environmental Action (Enact), Travel Bureau and Typing Center. Student Legal Services is a separate part of Student Association providing legal advice to students and student organizations. It is staffed by an attorney for students working with a student advisory commission. [3]

Independent of the executive branch are Judicial Court members and autonomous boards outlined in the Bylaws. Judicial Court reviews proposed student organization constitutions, hears student welfare appeals and litigates student organization appeals. The student boards are Social Activities Board, Elections Board, Student Senate Steering Board and Credentials Board. The chairman of these boards are chosen by the president. Judicial Court members are elected in April, and post-election vacancies are filled by presidential appointment. [4]

DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM:

The primary activities of Student Association are those coming under each of the departmental offices or boards. Each director is responsible for conducting the stated activities of their department. Goals are set at the beginning of the year and modified according to instructions from Student Senate or the executive branch. Historically the success or failure of a department has been dependent on the abilities of the directors.

This type of independence works both for and against the executive branch. On the positive side, the officers and directors can plan activities without having to get step-by-step approval from Senate. On the negative side, though, senators often feel they are "in the dark" about departmental actions and are reluctant to volunteer time and effort when needed.

In a practicum study of Student Association, graduate student Jeff Carstens stated he found frustration existing between senators and executive officers. Senators found few interested in association activities at their hall council meetings. Executive officers found little support for their duties among individual senators. [5]

Carstens went on to state that executive officers suffered from a type of stress burnout near the end of their term. A lack of enthusiasm for their activities in Student Senate, a high director turnover rate and senate divisiveness wore down the officers. A framework of cooperation expected between Student Senate and the executive branch seemed to have fallen apart. [6]

The Student Association bylaws state or imply cooperation between the senate and department directors. Considered

especially important by senators are the departments of Student Services, University Affairs and Off-Campus Student Affairs. However, directors say they feel uncomfortable appearing before the full senate body. In turn, individual senators rarely take time to find the directors during their office hours. Unfortunately Student Association lacks an internal system where departmental directors can get together with their parallel senate committees (i.e. Academic Affairs with Academics Committee, Governmental Affairs with Rules and Constitution Committee, University Services with Student Services Committee.) Such a system would encourage more effective planning of activities while keeping senators out "of the dark."

Activities conducted by the executive departments, perhaps, are the most visible part of this organization. A frequent question heard about Student Association is "What does it do for me the student?" To which the response is often Student Services. The Better Business Bureau provides references on local businesses. The Birth Control Information Center offers free birth control literature and operates in cooperation with the Planned Parenthood of East Central Indiana. Environmental Action plans, in cooperation with other student organizations, Earth Day in the spring. The Travel Bureau plans a Spring Quarter break trip to Florida. The Typing Center will type a student's paper at a cost comparable to that charged by private contractors.

In addition to these services, however, Student Association also functions as the sole governmental voice for the entire

student body. In theory the association can claim to be a fully operational system of government. The primary question though is whether it will be recognized as such by administration and students. Or instead will Student Association be viewed merely as a token student government?

In a 1978-1979 survey of student opinion, doctoral student Nancy Miller found that students were undecided whether student government consistently dealt with important campus issues. Also they were undecided as to whether students who sought increased participation were generally reflecting the views of the majority of students. [7].

From these results, one could conclude that the association has failed to project an effective image of itself. Past issues of Burriss Laboratory School, campus bus service and traffic conditions and proposed academic policies are not even mentioned by those seeking election or re-election. The structure of policy-making which includes the University Senate, high-ranking administrators and the Board of Trustees is understood by few student senators. The end result is that most students have a difficult time understanding the roles and benefits of a student government.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To improve Student Association requires first an understanding of its structure and its current problems. The previous two sub-sections have dealt with these two areas. Next this paper will move to actual specifics for improving the organization. These will be better planning, better promotions,

and better communications with student organizations, administrators, University Senate, the Board of Trustees and campus press.

In line with better planning, Student Association should concentrate on setting concrete goals for activities and programs during the year. Due to the complexity of Student Association, the new executive officers spend most of their Spring Quarter simply learning about the organization. A budget is prepared, frequently without the advice of outgoing directors or officers and without senate input. After budget approval, both the executive officers and student senators should work together to plan concrete activities for the coming academic year. This could be with the aforementioned senate committee and director meetings or even individual senators volunteering time to help director programs.

Next, executive officers and directors should spend more time and effort to better promote the association. In the past, this has simply been done by Daily News advertisements. An initial accomplishment of the 1983-84 administration was in diversifying their promotions, with an orientation display, presidential letters, and the beginning of a newsletter. Unfortunately there was little follow-up, and adverse publicity was not properly countered. As a result, the student leaders left office with a less than perfect image among their peers.

The executive branch needs to pay attention not only to senators and individual students, but also to student groups. As "voice" of the student body, Student Association has the responsibility to communicate with and help other student

groups such as Residence Hall Association, Student Center Programming Board, Interfraternity Council and Black Student Association. Communication efforts should not stop with meetings of the Social Activities Board or Cardinal Roundtable. A newsletter sponsored by Student Association with news from other students groups is one possibility. Other methods of better communication would be having Student Association invite student leaders from various organizations to attend executive and senate meetings.

In addition to student social concerns, the organization deals with student academic areas. In this regard, greater and more direct lines of communication should exist between Student Association and University Senate. Seven students serve on the Student Welfare Council, and student senators have served on the University Senate Agenda Committee. While this arrangement works in theory, practical experience has demonstrated that relatively few student originated issues have been considered by University Senate in recent years. Student Association officers have almost a daily need to talk to University Senate members. This is true whether it is a matter considered by University Senate, or a Student Senate bill or action by a committee or council. One of Miller's recommendations regarding governance was as follows:

"Students, faculty, administrators and trustees perceive student participation in university governance as desirable. ... The support of the faculty and administrators is essential to the success of student involvement in university governance ... open communication and cooperation among students, faculty, administrators and trustees is essential for meaningful and effective student participation in university governance." [8].

The winning presidential candidate for this year's Student Association elections made a rightful issue of student cooperation with the administration. Simply being able to get through to administrators to voice a concern is an important accomplishment. By letters, forums, referendums and even political advertisements, Student Association can make its views known. Having concerns and stances known will be the first step in developing meaningful dialogue with the administration.

An important relationship which should be developed is a rapport between the Student Association and the Board of Trustees. In the 1983-84 year, the student member of the Board of Trustees served also as an executive sub-director of Student Association. Such a situation is more uncommon than not. Students, faculty, and administrators in the Miller study expressed agreement that student membership on the Board of Trustees had been favorably received by students. These three groups, however, were undecided as to the acceptance of this representative by faculty and administrators. [9] More probably, if the student member were considered also a part of Student Association, then that person's stature as a representative voice of students would increase among faculty and administrators.

For publicity, the executive branch should try to pursue a more aggressive news approach with the Daily News. Examples could be weekly advertisements, routine news releases and interviews with officers and other S.A. leaders. Other media such as Orient, Verbatim, WBST and individual hall publications

should be explored as vehicles for communication with the student body.

Finally, the Student Association officers should strive to keep press lines open with campus publications, despite whatever bad publicity may from time to time be received from the media. Keeping the lines of communication open will help to foster understanding on both sides of the news story.

SUMMARY:

The experience of participation in student government is by its nature full of hopes and disappointments for students. Students enter believing in classroom democracy but find their afternoons occupied by doing routine paperwork. They come in inexperienced and leave before they have mastered the job. This paper is designed to aid the current administration in their efforts to improve Student Association.

While more radical solutions could be suggested to improve Student Association, such as in reducing the number of senators or making offices multi-year appointments and hiring a professional staff, more modest changes have been proposed. All that which has been suggested can be accomplished simply as part of better management and promotions. Whether it is in reducing friction between the Student Association and the media, or better planning, or better staffing, these ideas can and should be implemented for a better Student Association.

Section Notes

1. Ball State Student Association Constitution and Bylaws, Article III, p. 8-9. (revised June 1983).
2. Ball State Student Association 1983-84 Budget, p. 1.
3. Bylaws, Article II, p. 2-6.
4. Bylaws, Article IV 11-12.
5. Jeff Carstens, "The Student Association: A Case Study," EdHi. 599, Spring 1983, p. 8.
6. Carstens, p. 9.
7. Nancy Miller, Student Participation in the Governance of Ball State University as Perceived by Students, Faculty, Administrators and Trustees," Ball State University, 1979, p. 237.
8. Miller, p. 288-290.
9. Ibid., p. 269-270.

Students for Students, Part III

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

Residence Hall Association is composed of representatives from each of the 34 Ball State residence halls. The location of the meetings rotates from hall to hall each week. Formed in 1969, Ball State's Residence Hall Association became a permanent member of the Great Lakes Conference of Residence Halls (GLACURH) and National Conference of Residence Halls (NACURH) in 1972 and 1973, respectively. Currently RHA has a budget of approximately \$7,300.

Serving as a resource center for 6,800 on-campus students, Residence Hall Association, in its structure, resembles a hall government. A president, committee vice-president, conference vice-president, treasurer, recording secretary and coordinating (newsletter) secretary are elected by fellow members in late April. Four committees -- Hall Facilities and Dining Service, Personal Awareness, Public Relations and Social Programming -- conduct designated activities throughout the year.[1]

In philosophy, RHA stresses expanding hall programming. Often a major part of meeting time is given to individual hall happenings and how members can help a representative with a problem. Consequently such topics as motivation, leadership and new social programming are stressed at workshops and regional conferences.

Residence Hall Association either has promoted or sponsored the following activities: orientation events, On-Campus Days, Resident of the Month and Hall of the Quarter awards, Whistle-Stop, Campus Chest and Goofy Olympics. In addition, members conduct leadership workshops, co-host state conventions and help plan for a national conference. The organization rents out a

button-maker and sound system to individual halls.

DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM

Despite all these activities, however, the Residence Hall Association has a hard time gaining credibility with both the press and students. The organization is widely regarded as lacking purpose among students beyond the public programs put on two or three times a year. Part of the problem lies in the structure of the association's meetings. Meetings function as planning sessions with open discussion. Most event promotion is done by either executive officers or committee chairpeople. This leads to selective involvement of those representatives' hall members. In addition, several halls' representatives view the organization as a stepping stone for more prestigious hall council positions.

As individual representatives provide the major link to hall councils, absences and resignations can cause significant problems. Typically, as many as six representatives are absent per meeting and three to four halls lose voting privileges during each quarter because of absences. [2]

While attendance problems are not new for residence hall associations -- either here or at other Indiana campuses -- efforts to counteract them have had mixed results. Attendance at Thursday night meetings rises at the beginning of quarters and after spring elections but falls off during Winter Quarter. Thursday night classes and Friday tests are routine excuses, but proxies are seldom sought out in these situations.

Therefore outside efforts are needed to draw in hall representatives and hall support. As previously mentioned,

Residence Hall Association no longer receives regular press coverage and so promotions must be largely internal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Residence Hall Association often finds itself pulled in two opposing directions for its future and purpose. First the halls look toward the organization as a "big brother", helping to advise, plan and promote the halls' activities. Also the halls want a campus outlet for their complaints and concerns -- most often directed toward the housing office. These two concepts will be explored first in determining what recommendations are best for the organization.

According to their constitution, Residence Hall Association has a stated purpose of serving as "a resource group for hall activities." Within individual halls, directors and staff play an advisory role in programming, but most activities are done by hall councils. Halls no longer try to serve as a home away from home but instead try to promote group identity and stress adult responsibility. [3] Hall films, dances and coffeehouses are now planned by students, as well as orientation activities in the fall. Residence Hall Association promotes such programs, aids in publicity and provides organizational planning packets.

These activities do not always have to be social. The organization has matching funds available to any hall to sponsor speakers and presentations on educational topics. Students from the beginning have had opportunities for enriched social environments, as with the Honors Program or now defunct Carmichael Program. These programs have brought national recognition to the

campus. [4]. Residence Hall Association has recently promoted educational opportunities more aggressively, with alcohol awareness sessions, crime prevention programs and other individual hall activities funded from association funds.

Even as the halls are seeking more guidance and input for their activities, student rights are becoming a growing concern of the association. In the past 15 years, residence hall living has become both more equal (elimination of separate female visiting hours) and more restrictive (the honoring of quiet and non-smoking area requests by students.) Students now sit on the Disciplinary Review Board to consider student discipline appeals. Student staff are trained to act in the role of counselor as well as being a disciplinarian.

The lifestyles of students living in residence halls continue to be a major concern of association members. Issues with which the organization dealt in the past year include new dryer-use costs, VCR showing in halls and room construction policy. Past issues such as visitation hours, alcohol policies and room damages are now being taken up by other state university residence hall associations and are likely to come up again at Ball State. As individual students seek new arrangements for their changing lifestyles, the association must strive to deal with these requests.

Keeping in mind student concerns then, these areas can be identified for improvement: committee work; funding; hall publicity; Input, the association newsletter; and press connections.

The four main committees of Residence Hall Association meet

regularly to plan events, programs and policies for the organization. Dining Service and Hall Facilities has concentrated during the past two years on a new paint and room construction policy. Personal Awareness sponsors WhistleStop, a crime prevention program, and supervises the educational fund for the halls. Public Relations handles publicity in the form of fliers, posters and Daily News advertisements. Social Programming plans On-Campus Days and Goofy Olympics, two hall inter-hall competition and unity programs.

The biggest problem for the committees is group membership, since only half of the 34 members regularly attend committee meetings. As a result, committee chairs choose one or two reliable members and form an "inner" group to do all the work. As a result, often representatives know little about events other than what they read in the minutes. Allowing new members greater responsibilities in committees and promoting stricter attendance at committee meetings would improve the situation.

Funding, next, is a great concern since an increasing proportion of the organization's budget has fixed spending amounts. Workshops, operating funds and conferences require one-third of the budget, committee work one-third and Input and campus participation fees occupy the last third. Money for new events should be sought out. Increased funding could allow for buying additional equipment for hall use, such as lighting and stage settings. (The Indiana University association for example offers student services in refrigerator, tool and fan rentals) In addition, more association members could be funded to go to state

and national conferences. An Autumn Quarter activity could be planned comparable to On-Campus Days or Goofy Olympics.

In the case of promoting its message, the organization has one of the more effective methods of communication. Representatives are told of events at meetings and then reminded in weekly minutes. The happenings are described to hall councils and from there they are passed on to individual students through hall minutes. Problems arise when members do not attend meetings, or attend but volunteer little interest or information. For this purpose executive officers were assigned motivation skits during the Winter Quarter to present at meetings. In addition, individual hall minutes are sent to the association office to provide a two-way source of communication.

Residence Hall Association has also sponsored a written form of communication to the halls, that of the Input newsletter in existence since 1975. The publication has gone from tabloid to newsletter form, and from a regular staff to an executive officer project. In this author's six months as editor, three issues were produced, averaging one every two months. Committee chairpersons had individual projects to promote and could be coaxed into supplying basic information under deadline. The executive officers, especially president and coordinating vice-president became regular contributors. In addition the selection of Resident of the Month became an executive decision closely tied with the newsletter publication.

The housing office found the newsletter helpful in promoting their own activities, such as staff selection and housing deadlines. Seeking outside experts on selected topics

also proved popular and beneficial as a way to promote Residence Hall Association.

For these benefits, however, problems also occurred. Non-officer representatives did not contribute to the newsletter, despite repeated encouragement. Also enthusiasm for writing materials waned as the year progressed. Personal time conflicts and delayed articles prevented more regular publications.

To reduce these problems, officers and the Input editor should try establishing publication dates to coincide with major Residence Hall Association events. Establishing a committee to prepare Input, or even co-editors would help to improve the publication. In addition, methods should be explored to get all hall representatives to submit materials.

Since the Input newsletter is at best a monthly publication (the 1984-85 budget calls for seven issues over a nine month period), the campus press should still be regarded as the primary means to publicize association events. For this purpose, the association's publicity committee should become more active. Press releases and press contacts should be done on a regular basis. Working on ways for regular coverage of meetings should be sought even if only to send minutes to the Daily News news editor.

CONCLUSION:

Residence Hall Association is an organization suffering primarily from low visibility and a division of purpose as seen by students. Opportunities exist such as President's Roundtable and various ad-hoc committees (such as the one to interview University presidential candidates) to increase Residence Hall Association prestige. However, without attention to problems in

attendance, funding and publicity, improvement of the organization will be hampered. Activities such as "On-Campus Days" act to promote the association although room still exists for improvement. With dual attention to the halls needs and those of the individual student, Residence Hall Association can better meet the challenges it currently faces.

Section Notes

1. Residence Hall Association Constitution, Article IV
p. 2-3. (revised 1980).

2. From statements made by Beth Frazee, Residence Hall
Association secretary, at April 26 meeting.

3. Linda Rowe, New Directions for Student Services --
Increasing the Educational Role of Residence Halls, Nov. 13,
1981, p. 7-8.

4. Rowe, p. 58

Students for Students, Part IV

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

The Student Center Programming Board (renamed from Student Center Governing Board in 1983) is the university's top activities programmer on campus. As the duties of student class officers faded away in the 1960s and 1970s, the board took charge of campus-wide dances, coffeehouses, orientation activities and Miss Ball State. The Activities Night on the second Friday of September is the oldest board event, one which is believed to have been started in 1952 with the opening of the Student Center). One of the newest, A Fool's Eve, a type of carnival attracts the largest audience of 2,000-3,000 in March. The board has the best set-up for publicity with a separate promotions committee and a regular Friday page advertisement in the Daily News.

Student Center Programming Board follows a similar structure to that of Student Association. The executive officers are the president, vice-president and treasurer. The office of secretary is a non-voting paid position. The committee coordinators are for Films, Games and Tournaments, Ideas and Issues, Musical Entertainment, Personnel, Promotions, Special Events, Traditions, Travel and Recreation and Video Productions. A professional program coordinator advises the board also. These people comprise the executive board membership. [1]

The purpose of the Student Center Programming Board is to plan campus events and activities appropriate for various student interests. With a budget of approximately \$26,500,

several programs were planned by the board in the 1983-84 year. They include the already mentioned Activities Night and A Fool's Eve, with the first being the responsibility of the Traditions Committee, and the latter assigned to Special Events. A Day in the Park is for the musical crowd and is the responsibility of the Musical Entertainment committee. This pattern is then followed for films, area trips, Miss Ball State, Thursday forums and trivia contests with each being assigned to a particular committee. Thus, multiple activities are planned for different Student Center audiences.

From these activities the board has tried to reach out to as many different student body groups as possible. For example, Activities Night has a much different audience (generally freshman students) than the children's Easter Egg hunt, (for children of students and faculty.) Since the board's primary source of funds is from student fees, it is important that they try to find out what all the interests of students are and how to best program for them.

For each event, a detailed checklist is provided and a time-table set up. With a new program, attendance figures and costs are checked in order to determine whether or not the expense was justified. This process becomes especially important in selecting films or scheduling trips where each choice could mean a substantial profit or loss. Thus, membership on the board can require a greater financial expertise than even some higher budgeted student organizations.

DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM

Since the Student Center Programming Board does not function as a type of government, it has more freedom to operate in regards to policies, procedures and discussions. Coordinators lead their committees in planning and executing all programs assigned to them. The executive officers and the total board act as the overseeing group for the coordinators. However, often the overall planning does not involve individual committee members. Committee members do not know how much work is to be done week to week, and often weeks of inactivity follow days of hectic construction. [2] As a result, the turnover rate of committee members is high and committee sizes vary from quarter to quarter.

A further complication for committee members is that coordinators are chosen often from outside, with personality and enthusiasm counting frequently as much as experience. As a result coordinators often find little loyalty among workers who switch from committee to committee based on the coordinator's personality.

With this uncertainty in the committees, coordinators inevitably turn to each other to accomplish a project. For example A Fool's Eve, this initially started as the responsibility of Special Events. However soon the coordinator Promotions arranged advertisements, Musical Entertainment made band and entertainer contacts and Traditions helped with student group contacts. The Special Events Committee members were left with only helping on construction, distributing fliers and

escorting groups to booth locations.[3]

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Student Center Programming Board, it is often said, faces a problem not of the limitation of its students, but of the limitations imposed by the location of the building itself. Since the Student Center's first unit was completed in 1952, the campus has developed northward. Only Wagoner Complex and Elliott Hall are within easy walking distance of the Student Center, so the building tends not to be in the areas of heavy student traffic. In addition, the two most recent additions to the Student Center -- a video arcade room and outdoor recreation rental service -- have not halted a decline in student traffic at the building. [4] These problems are not totally within the realm of the board's area of responsibility, but still need to be taken into consideration.

The recommendations for the Student Center Programming Board can be broken down into the following areas: increased membership, cooperation with Student Center personnel and student organizations, new programming, increased funding, increased promotions, and better publicity. [5]

An obvious answer to the committee problem mentioned earlier would be to try to increase the committee size. Activities Night in part serves this purpose, as the committee displays along with board brochures have become more elaborate and draw a large number of freshmen who indicate an interest in committee membership. However, after their first committee meeting, new members often find out project work will not start for two or

three months. Infrequent meetings lead to a large drop-out rate. Therefore, as much personnel work as possible should be carried out to keep members active.*

Recent activities designed to boost committee member morale should be continued. These include the all-committee dinner in the fall and the issuing of committee cards for discounts on board events. Committee members have responded favorably to gaining a view of the entire board network.

Along these lines also could be better communciation with Student Center personnel and student organizations. Resources could be combined for joint projects. Past examples have included helping the Student Center Recreations Coordinator to set up an outdoor equipment rental and co-sponsoring a speaker with Environmental Action for Earth Day. Current board members have indicated an interest in continuing and expanding such activities. A principal advantage of such co-sponsorship is sharing of costs by both groups. The board remains at a disadvantage in that, while personnel and expertise have expanded, funding is still limited to the current activities. Money-making activites such as films and Miss Ball State are really designed to just break even. The possibility of charging money for Activities Night, A Fool's Eve and A Day in the Park has to be weighed against possible decreased attendance.

Better board promotions might help to gain more funding if targeted at the proper audiences. Unfortunately administrators,

*See epilogue for a further discussion on this idea.

the student press and public rarely pay attention to programming and activities which go right. As a result, funding increases are relatively small even when programs improve. Making a researched, specific item-to-item appeal to the Board of Trustees could help to improve the case for more funding.

The Student Center Programming Board is one of the few groups, and the only one of the three organizations in this report which requires program and event evaluations. These should continue and the board should strive to goals and achievements know to all members. Listed in these evaluations are promotional checklists. However such concepts as regular weekly advertisements, attractive posters and fliers, prominent banners and press releases depend on experience and advance planning. Other types of promotions used by committees include Scramble Light promotions, sidewalk chalk displays, book markers with film listings and balloon give-aways. Having these promotions become standard goes a long way toward increasing the overall board image and reaching new different audiences.

Finally, press relations are currently limited, much in the same manner as Residence Hall Association, in that no regular coverage exists. Responses to press releases have been mixed and the best response seems to come from the regular Friday advertisement, according to statements of movie viewers who read the Daily News. Establishing press contacts is the first step in improving press coverage.

CONCLUSION:

The Student Center Programming Board currently finds itself divided between putting its energies into new activities or improving its more traditional events. It is hampered by the building's location and facilities. The committee structure still has problems despite increased membership. Yet the board events are regarded as some of the best run and best promoted of any student organization. Improvements could come in delegating more responsibilities to committee members and seeking more co-operation with other student organization. Increased funding and publicity are long-term goals for which the board can strive. Until then the board needs to keep up its efforts in planning quality programs.

Section Notes

1. Student Center Programming Board Constitution, Article III, p. 1, Revised Spring 1984.

2. From a discussion with Mari Ann Barta, April 19, 1984 reviewing participation in Activities Night and A Fool's Eve."

3. From participation on the Special Events Committee, Spring 1983. While working on a class study on Activities Night at the same time, I was allowed to sit in on coordinator planning sessions. It followed the same patterns also.

4. Gracie Sahm, "Survey Shows Decreased Traffic in Student Center," Ball State Daily News, April 21, 1984 Vol 63, No. 140 p. 3.

5. Several of these ideas came from The Administration of College Union and Campus Activities by William Brattain, USA 1981 p. 204-210.

Students for Students, Part V

EPILOGUE

One of the most interesting aspects of covering student organizations is that leader personalities in large part determine policy and procedure. Therefore the disclaimer is made that author's observations were based on the actions of the 1983-1984 student leaders in these organizations. Since new officers were installed in the Spring Quarter, I have had time to briefly view the new officers in action. Looking into the future year, some developments appear to be promising.

In the general area of press relations, the interesting combination of a new university president and new student leader presidents can mean a rebuilding of press-government ties. If the concept of social responsibility is advanced to the press (which emphasizes issues instead of events), a more even distribution of student news could result. The news coverage will ultimately depend on how trustworthy and significant reporters see student actions to be.

For Student Association, a trend seems to be emerging among their president and directors towards greater cooperation with other organizations. Typically this involves financial aid or cost-sharing, for example with the programming board. Also the president has attached more significance to becoming a student leader figure, such as in dealing with off-campus parties and bus service cutbacks.

In the case of Residence Hall Association, the officers will benefit from having known and worked with each other

previously. Three of the six officers played an active part in their residence hall programming efforts, while the other three showed an eagerness to learn.

With Student Center Programming Board, the recognition of such problems as those in committee attitudes which were described earlier has led to the re-activization of the Personnel Committee. This committee will supervise Activities Night, be in charge of recruiting new members, planning the all committee dinner and establish procedures for selecting new committee coordinators. This job had been previously split among different committees and the executive council. One disturbing development, however, is the high turnover of Student Center staff. I can offer no predictions on how this will affect the morale of board members.

As this is being written, the new budgets are being submitted to the administration. While in essence budget figures have already been set (allotments lower than budget requests are typically expected by the organizations), this should not be permitted to impede striving for plans for greater programming by all three groups.

To those future student leaders in these organizations, I hope these words and analyses will be of help. I can not say that student groups will be any better or worse than what past experience has shown. The possibility always exists for improvement, and improvement was what this senior honors thesis was intended to encourage.

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